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(54) Title: OPTICAL IMAGING CONTRAST AGENTS COMPRISING A TARGETING VECTOR LINKED TO A FLUOROPHORE

(57) **Abstract:** The invention provides contrast agents for optical imaging of vulnerable atherosclerotic plaque in patients. The contrast agents may be used in diagnosis of vulnerable atherosclerotic plaque, for follow up of progress in disease development, for follow up of treatment of vulnerable atherosclerotic plaque and for surgical guidance. Further, the invention provides methods for optical imaging of vulnerable atherosclerotic plaque in patients.